

Message Text

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21 16

ACTION DOTE-00

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 SCI-06 EB-11 DRC-01 COME-00

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7503

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ETRN TECH JA

SUBJ: JNR AND MAGNETIC LEVITATION

REF: A. STATE 197831 B. TOKYO A-839

1. ARTICLE IN AUGUST ISSUE INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY JOURNAL RE ALLEGED REJECTION BY MOT OF MAGNETIC LEVITATION FOR SECOND SHINKANSEN LINE BETWEEN TOKYO AND OSAKA APPARENTLY WAS BASED ON NEWS ITEM PUBLISHED BY TOKYO NEWSPAPER (ASAHI SHIMBUN) ON MAY 24, 1973. ACCORDING TO KAWATE (MINISTER'S SECRETARIAT, MOT), ASAHI ARTICLE WAS BASED ON PRIVATE CONVERSATION BETWEEN MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND PERSON KAWATE WOULD NOT IDENTIFY. ARTICLE INDICATED SECOND QTE NEW TOKAIDO LINE UNQTE BETWEEN TOKYO AND OSAKA WOULD BE IMPROVED TYPE OF CONVENTIONAL HIGH SPEED TRAIN, SINCE LINEAR MOTOT SYSTEM (MAGNETIC LEVITATION) WAS CONSIDERED TO BE PREMATURE. FULL TEXT OF ARTICLE BEING AIRPOUCHED AS ENCLOSURE TO TOKYO A-839. KAWATE SAID ASAHI STORY HAD BEEN QUESTIONED ON THREE OCCASIONS IN DIET AND TRANSPORT MINISTER HAD INITIALLY REPLIED THAT ARTICLE DID NOT REFLECT ENTIRELY ACCURATELY WHAT HE HAD SAID; INDICATED NEWSPAPER HAD REPORTED HIS REMARKS AS PRECISE STATEMENTS WHILE IN FACT THEY HAD BEEN VERY VAGUE AND IMPRECISE.

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2. HOWEVER, KAWATE SAID GORENMENT'S DEFINITIVE STATE-
MENT ON THIS ISSUE WAS PRESENTED TO DIET ON SEPT 6
BY PRESIDENT OF JAPAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS (JNR). JNR
PRESIDENT STATED AS HIS CONCLUSION THAT QTE TO SOLVE
THE CAPACITY PROBLEM OF THE TOKAIDO LINE IT MAY BE
NECESSARY TO BUILD A CONVENTIONAL LINE RATHER THAN
THE LINEAR MOTOR TYPE. UNQTE. (FULL TEXT ENCLOSED
WITH TOKYO A-839.)

3. COMMENT. KAWATE, OBVIOUSLY UNDER INSTRUCTIONS,
WOULD NOT ELABORATE UPON JNR STATEMENT. SEEMS CLEAR,
HOWEVER, FROM TONE OF STATEMENT THAT WHILE JNR AND MOT
HAVE NOT DEFINITELY RULED OUT POSSIBILITY OF ULTIMATELY
BUILDING NEW LINE BASED ON PRINCIPLE OF MAGNETIC
LEVITATION, THEY HAVE SERIOUS RESERVATIONS AS TO
PRACTICABILITY OF DOING SO IN COMING DECADE.
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